

S E C R E T

October 3, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Special Group (CI) Meeting
2:30 p.m., Thursday, October 3, 1963

PRESENT: Governor Harriman, Mr. Gilpatric, Mr. McCone, Mr. Coffin vice
Mr. Bell, Mr. Wilson vice Mr. Murrow, Colonel Higgins vice
General Taylor, Mr. Nolan vice the Attorney General

Mr. Margolies and Mr. Herbert were present for Item No. 2.

Mr. Belcher was present for Item No. 3.

NSC REVIEW
COMPLETED
, 6/26/2003

Mr. Jorden and Mr. Karamessines were present for the meeting.

1. Rules of Procedure for the Group

The Chairman commented that papers pertinent to agenda items should be distributed at least one day prior to the meeting. He added that the members should feel free to bring any emergency problems to the attention of the Group.

2. Venezuela

a. Follow-up Proposal from September 19 meeting. Mr. Margolies, Director of the Office of East Coast Affairs, ARA, reviewed the actions taken by a joint working group on the list of suggestions for countering terrorism in Venezuela which [redacted]

Based on discussions within the working group and in consultation with the Country Team, recommendations for an agreed course of action were developed and are indicated in the State memorandum circulated for this item. All interested agencies agreed that the most immediate single measure that can be taken to counter the terrorist threat is to implement promptly the unified police command in Caracas. Since the coup in the Dominican Republic, it is believed that Betancourt will be more receptive to US advice and assistance on measures to cope with the terrorists.

During a general discussion of the situation, the following points were mentioned. The roundup of Communist and leftist leaders is a step in the right direction. It is too early to determine what actions the Venezuelan Government will take to prosecute the recently arrested Communist senators and deputies. Indications are that senior military officers are probably satisfied with these measures but lower ranking officers do not believe that enough has been done. General O'Meara's views on this situation have been incorporated into the proposed recommendations. At this time, Betancourt has not expressed a desire for additional assistance. Although a number of Communists and pro-Communist activists have been arrested throughout the Country, the key men in the terrorist organization have not as yet been apprehended.

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2.

The Group approved the joint working group's recommendations, and requested that the Country Team be informed of its decision.

The Group requested that the Interagency Working Group keep the Group informed on a weekly basis on developments related to the terrorist situation in Venezuela.

b. Progress Report on the Internal Defense Plan for Venezuela. The Group approved the second progress report on the IDP for Venezuela and the recommendations contained in the State memorandum submitted for this item.

3. Progress Report on the Internal Defense Plan for Colombia

Mr. Belcher, Director of the Office of West Coast Affairs, ARA, in commenting on the third progress report, stated that programs are going well and resources available are considered adequate at this time.

The question of reduction of police personnel has not yet been resolved but additional revenue resources are available to maintain the police force at present levels. It is believed that an appeal will be favorably received by the Colombian Government on the proposed cut in the national police budget. The revision of the penal code will greatly assist the Government in all enforcement measures and enable it to successfully bring terrorists to trial.

Although there has been an increase in urban terrorism, success has been achieved in reducing violence in the rural areas. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of bandits killed and military casualties and by the decrease in civilian casualties. The military, based on their increased mobility and communications capability, have been able to conduct highly successful operations against rural bandit groups.

As to problem areas, no action has been taken to reform the intelligence apparatus. Action is still pending on a report submitted to the President on this subject, but there is no reason to expect that he will not act favorably on this issue. The question of funding the Civil Defense Warning Nets is now being studied to avoid duplication of existing and planned facilities. Mr. Coffin interjected that a cable had been sent to the field requesting clarification on this project.

Mr. Belcher stated that although the Colombian Government is not under as much pressure as the Venezuelan Government, it now has more tools available to enable it to act with greater firmness in view of the terrorist and bandit threat.

The Chairman commented that the summary report (Bogota Airgram 114 dated 21 August 1963) concerning Country Team youth activities indicates an impressive effort. Mr. Belcher added that the Country Team has a vigorous program and that similar efforts are being conducted in other posts in Latin America. The Group agreed with Mr. Belcher's recommendation that a copy of this report, on youth activities, be circulated to all posts in Latin America for their information.

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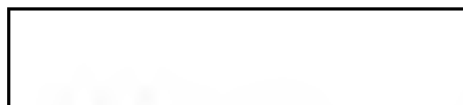
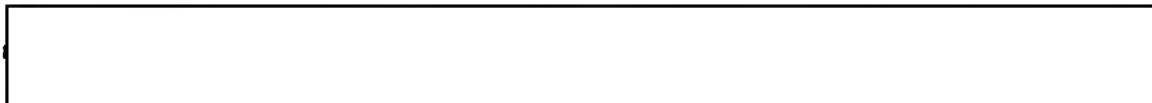
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3.

The Group approved the progress report and its supplement subject to the comments contained in the State memorandum submitted for this item.

Miscellaneous

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James W. Dingeman
Executive Secretary
Special Group (CI)

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